



REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN
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UNIVERSITE D'ABOMEY-CALAVI
CENTRE DE RECHERCHE POUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LES MALADIES INFECTIEUSES TROPICALES (CReMIT)
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INNOVATION POLICY

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TIDRC/UAC RESEARCH GRANTS MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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INTRODUCTION

The Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center of the University of Abomey-Calavi (TIDRC/UAC), Benin, aspires to be the research and innovation hub of Benin and that of Africa. To this end, the Center places emphasis on fundamental and applied research that leads to problem-solving innovations for the benefit of industry and society. It also counts on demand-driven innovations that lead to research commercialization as a potential income stream of the Center.

Innovations reflect creative thinking that makes distinct contributions to science advancement. They are novel initiatives that offer practical solutions to societal problems and unlock the challenges of industry. The output of innovations are potential products and services that require validation to meet the requirements of research commercialization. They are also early stage developing research works that require further investigation leading to pilot and scale-up by relevant public agencies and industry.

This TIDRC/UAC Innovation policy is mission-oriented, geared towards directing research efforts and investments to the promotion of innovations that address industrial and social challenges. It is intended to provide the guiding framework for transforming scientific research knowledge into innovations; deriving economic value from the innovations through industry uptake; and direct commercialization of the innovations into business start-ups.

The policy will provide a link between staff and student innovations and the needs of industry and society, as well as making entrepreneurs out of students and staff from their innovations.

2.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Innovations are the product of research and this innovation policy promotes the extension and outreach services mandate of TIDRC/UAC, which includes extending the benefits of research output to industry and society. The underlying principle for increasing research relevance is a paradigm shift from undertaking academic research for its own sake, to problem-solving research, innovation and commercialization to confront the challenges of society.

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this innovation policy is to:

- a. Provide guidelines for establishing and defining innovations by staff and students of the Center;
- b. Provide guidelines for documenting and commercializing innovations; and
- c. Provide guidelines for protecting and patenting innovations as provided for in the Intellectual Property policy.

2.2 Scope

This policy

- a. Describes what innovations are and what framework exists for protecting them for the benefit of the researcher and the Center at large;

- b. Provides the link between innovations and commercialization in order to underline the essence of modern research – finding solutions to industrial and societal problems;
- c. Promotes innovations from staff and students and propel uptake of research output by industry; and
- d. Provide the framework for nurturing innovations and ideas into businesses through technical and financial support.

3.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

TIDRC/UAC considers innovations as the products of fundamental and applied scientific research, which ought to be utilized by industry or directly solve social problems.

This policy provides the framework for guiding staff and student innovation-driven research. It also presents opportunities for supporting staff and student innovations as well as strategies for protecting and commercializing innovations.

3.1 Applicability of Policy

This policy shall be applicable to Center personnel who shall be as listed:

- a. Any student performing a research internship with the Center;
- b. Any member of staff either permanent, casual, adjunct, on sabbatical or visiting;
and
- c. Collaborators from any, Institution from the University, higher education institution of Benin, industry, research and affiliate institutions, international body or agency.

3.2 Establishing Innovations

Innovations will be derived from and supported by both student and staff research activity at TIDRC/UAC. Innovations will additionally arise from the Annual TIDRC/UAC Innovation and Career Fair, from individual/group of students with the support of staff (researchers). Existing structures at TIDRC/UAC including RGMO (overseeing the Intellectual Property aspect) will vet staff and student innovations using international and locally agreed benchmarks to establish their credibility for purposes of patenting, commercialization and industry uptake.

Innovations will generally qualify as such using internationally agreed benchmarks such as *scientific/technical orientation, originality, relevance, marketability, scalability and social impact*.

3.3 Utilization of Innovations

The TIDRC/UAC will provide the space, technical and financial support for transforming ideas and innovations into commercial products and services for the benefit of innovators and for both society and industry uptake. The output of research or innovation commercialization will be business start-ups and products for industrial use. Therefore, *Research + Innovation = Invention + Commercialization*.

3.4 Documenting and Commercializing Innovations

Staff and student innovations shall be driven by market needs (industry and society) and documented accordingly. They will be developed as projects for further investigation to qualify for scale-up and replication. This process would require society and industry investment, grant proposals for funding or self-financing, RGMO as the conduit.

Innovations will transition from research ideas to commercial ones to enable entry onto the market either for industry use or as business start-ups.

Innovation or research commercialization effectively entails linking research output to industry to enhance relevance of the enterprise. Innovations will thus directly respond to industry and the society needs based on demand or linked to industry for pilot and scale-up. Strategic Partnerships will be entered into with relevant industrial establishments to facilitate further development and uptake of the ensuing product or service from the innovation.

3.5 Support for staff and student innovators

TIDRC/UAC will, through RGMO, earmark funding support for staff and student innovators. The funding will extend to competitions and scale-up of innovations upon satisfactory scientific testing and viability assessment. The capacities of staff and students shall be periodically refreshed through training, to enable them initiate viable innovations that are particularly patentable.

The capacity of TIDRC/UAC convocation shall be updated on how to undertake problem-solving research leading to innovations. They will also learn about what innovations entail and how their ideas can be protected through patenting. They shall be abreast with the patenting database to enable them initiate robust and patentable innovations.

3.6 Protecting and Patenting Innovations

Patenting research output and innovations are meant to protect intellectual investments. Therefore, the ideas of staff and students as exhibited during innovation fairs and other

forms of research outputs, shall be protected through patenting. The Center shall promote confidence among staff and students by proactively assessing their ideas and innovations for protection. RGMO shall facilitate registration of patentable innovations with the Regional Intellectual Property Organization OAPI of which Benin is member. This will ensure innovators achieve full benefits from their innovations and associated inventions.

4.0 POLICY MANAGEMENT

RGMO operates under the auspices of the Director or Deputy-Directors and shall be responsible for facilitating and coordinating implementation of the TIDRC/UAC Innovation Policy. RGMO is represented on critical research and innovation-related committees of the Center, including the Intellectual Property Committee, the Research Ethics Committee, as well as the Innovation and Career Fair Committee, and shall therefore espouse the tenets of the Innovation Policy to continually enhance understanding of staff and students and to ensure policy compliance.

Meanwhile, the Bangui Agreement stipulates that whatever a researcher develops at the Center belongs to the Center. Nevertheless, there is need to credit individual researchers with their innovations in order to both motivate them to do more and to encourage others to do same. The benefits of innovations shall be shared between the innovator and the Center in line with the TIDRC/UAC Intellectual Property Policy.

Conclusion

This Innovation Policy is geared towards strengthening research commercialization at TIDRC/UAC. It aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry by placing emphasis on translating ideas, technologies and innovations and proposed solutions from research into marketable products and capital gain for industry and the general public.

References

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Approval & adoption

This Innovation Policy, code: TIDRC/RG/IP-01 is hereby formally approved and adopted as the official policy of the Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center/University of Abomey-Calavi, effective February 18, 2026



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